

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

EA-07 FRB-03 INR-07 IO-13 NEA-10 NSAE-00 USIA-06

OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

ERDA-05 OES-06 NRC-05 FEA-01 /101 W

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R 291706Z SEP 76

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TO SECSTATE WASH DC 3561

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PASS: ERDA FOR SIEVERING, VANDERRYN, NEWBY AND ERB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OECD, ERDA, TECH

SUBJECT: US INTEREST IN NEA COORDINATING GROUP ON GAS
COOLED FAST REACTOR DEVELOPMENT

1. SUMMARY: MISSION REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDED NEA-GCFR COORDINATING GROUP MEETING TO EXPLORE U.S. INTEREST IN MEMBERSHIP. COORDINATING GROUP VIEWED U.S. PARTICIPATION FAVORABLY AND SUGGESTED FORMAL APPLICATION IN TIME FOR SUBMISSION TO THE NEA STEERING COMMITTEE WHICH MEETS ON OCTOBER 14, 1976. AFTER REVIEW OF THE STATUTES AND CONDITIONS OF U.S. MEMBERSHIP, MISSION SUGGESTS U.S. DELAY ENTRY INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF THIS GROUP, PENDING BROADER EXAMINATION OF IMPLICATIONS FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE GCFR WORK WITHIN IEA. END SUMMARY

2. THE U.S. HAVING PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PARTICIPATING IN THE WORK OF THE NEA COORDINATING GROUP ON GAS COOLED FAST REACTOR DEVELOPMENT WAS INVITED TO ATTEND THE TENTH MEETING OF THE GROUP WHICH WAS HELD ON SEPTEMBER 16 AT OECD PARIS. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS
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TO REVIEW PROGRESS OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM OF THE

MEMBERS (CURRENTLY AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, FRG, FRANCE, JAPAN, THE NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND AND THE UK) AND TO DISCUSS FUTURE U.S. MEMBERSHIP IN THE GROUP. MISSION SCIENCE ADVISOR FOR ENERGY REPRESENTED THE U.S.

3. SUMMARIES OF THE R&D CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM WERE PRESENTED BY THE VARIOUS NATIONAL DELEGATES. THE COORDINATORS' ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT FOR 1975 WAS ALSO TABLED AND DISCUSSED. A COPY (NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT CHANNELS) HAS BEEN POUCHED TO D. ERB, ERDA. HIGHLIGHTS OF REPORT WAS THE CONCLUSION TO CONCENTRATE ON THE GCFR PIN FUEL DESIGN AND TO ABANDON THE EFFORT ON MORE ADVANCED COATED PARTICLE AND CARBIDE FUEL DEVELOPMENT.

4. U.S. ACTIVITIES AND PLANS IN THE FIELD OF GCFR TECHNOLOGY WERE PRESENTED BY THE U.S. PARTICIPANT AS CALLED FOR UNDER AGENDA ITEM 6. IT WAS INDICATED THAT AN ATTEMPT WOULD BE MADE TO OBTAIN A BRIEF WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF U.S. R&D ACTIVITIES IN THE GCFR FIELD FOR USE BY THE GROUP. MISSION WOULD APPRECIATE IF THIS COULD BE SENT TO MISSION FOR TRANSMISSION TO W. HAUSSERMAN, CHEF DE DIVISION DU DEVELOPPEMENT DE L'ENERGIE NUCLEAIRE, NEA

5. REGARDING U.S. MEMBERSHIP IN THE GROUP, THE CHAIRMAN INDICATED THIS WOULD BE VIEWED FAVORABLY AND COULD BE FORMALIZED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE NEA STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY ON OCTOBER 14, 1976 PROVIDED U.S. AGREEMENT TO JOIN IS RECEIVED IN WRITING BEFORE THAT DATE.

6. MISSION HAS REVIEWED IMPLICATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP AND THE STATUTES WHICH REGULATE THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GROUP AND SUGGESTS FINAL ACTION NOT BE TAKEN PRIOR TO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 14 FOR TWO PRINCIPAL REASONS.

7. FIRST, U.S. MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR OVERALL INTERNATIONAL R&D OBJECTIVES. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT A GREAT DEAL OF THE WORLD'S GCFR DEVELOPMENT IS COORDINATED BY THE NEA GROUP AND U.S. MEMBERSHIP MIGHT BE BENEFICIAL FOR THIS REASON, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT A GCFR PROGRAM MIGHT AT SOME POINT BE APPROPRIATE FOR IEA CONSIDERATION. MEMBERSHIP IN NEA GROUP MIGHT PRECLUDE SUCH DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS REGARD, MISSION BELIEVES THERE MAY BE POTENTIAL FOR A LARGE HARDWARE ORIENTED PROJECT (MISSION NOTES POTENTIAL

1977 ERDA DECISION TO PROCEED WITH PROGRAM DEFINITION OF
A GCFR DEMONSTRATION PLANT) WITH FEW CURRENT INDUSTRIAL
PROPRIETARY CONCERNS. MOST OF THE WORLD'S GCFR R&D
EFFORT IS GOVERNMENT FUNDED, NOT WITHSTANDING THE WORK

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OF THE EUROPEAN GAS BREEDER ASSOCIATION, KWU AND GULF.

8. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT IN ANY EVENT THE NEA WILL
ATTEMPT ASSERT PRIOR CLAIM TO ALL INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS
IN GCFR FIELD, AND WOULD RESIST ANY EFFORT ESTABLISH A
GCFR PROJECT WITHIN IEA. U.S. ENTRY INTO NEA GROUP
WOULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO PROPOSE PROJECT
FOR IEA CONTROL, IF WE EVER THOUGHT THIS ADVISABLE,
SINCE FRENCH (AND PERHAPS OTHERS) UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD SAY
WE WERE TRYING TO UNDERCUT NEA, AND WOULD CHARGE US WITH
BAD FAITH IN JOINING NEA GROUP IN FIRST PLACE.

9. SECONDLY, THE WORDING OF A NUMBER OF THE NINE
ARTICLES WHICH GOVERN THE GROUP'S ACTIONS, PRIMARILY
ARTICLES 6 (MODE OF OPERATION) AND 8 (EXCHANGE OF

INFORMATION) DOES NOT APPEAR ACCEPTABLE OR AT THE LEAST
REQUIRES CAREFUL EXAMINATION. ARTICLE 6 STATES AMONG
OTHER THINGS THAT "EACH PARTICIPANT AGREES: (A) TO CARRY
OUT WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COORDINATED PROGRAM AND
TIMETABLE ADOPTED BY THE GROUP, AND (B) TO FOLLOW THE
GROUP'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE "COORDINATION
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OF WORK." THE WORDS "AGREES TO FOLLOW" WOULD APPEAR TO
BE TOO BINDING ON NATIONAL GCFR PROGRAMS, ALTHOUGH THE
CHAIRMAN STATED THAT IN FACT THESE CLAUSES HAVE BEEN
INTERPRETED RATHER LOOSELY IN THE PAST. ARTICLE 8 IS A
PATENT AGREEMENT WHICH EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN TO REQUIRE
NEGOTIATION. ON THE BASIS THAT AT A MINIMUM AN EXCHANGE
OF LETTERS MUST OCCUR TO ARRIVE AT MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE
WORDING, THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE IN FACT INDICATED THAT
IT WOULD BE DOUBTFUL THE U.S. COULD FORMALLY SEEK
ADMISSION TO THE GROUP BY OCTOBER 14.

10. CONSIDERING POSSIBLE BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS
THE PROPOSED ERDA/FRG GAS REACTOR AGREEMENT, MISSION
BELIEVES LOSS OF R&D INFORMATION TO THE U. S. IF WE
DECIDE TO DELAY DECISION AND TAKE NO POSITION AT
OCTOBER 14 MEETING WILL BE MINIMAL. MISSION WOULD
APPRECIATE COMMENTS ON SUGGESTIONS IN THIS CABLE,
PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO POTENTIAL IEA COOPERATION.
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